



News Release

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Media Contact:
Jana Kettering
Public Information Officer
801-538-6339

Dr. Scott Williams Resigns from the UDOH

Williams leads major health initiatives for past 12 years

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Dr. Scott Williams has announced that he has resigned as Executive Director of the Utah Department of Health and will be leaving at the end of the month. Over the past 12 years Williams, a pediatrician, served as Division Director of Community and Family Health Services, Department Deputy Director, and for the last 14 months as Executive Director. “It has been a privilege to have served with two great Governors and to have associated with wonderful state employees and community partners and I’m very proud of the things we’ve accomplished together.”

Among the accomplishments Williams had personal direction over are:

- Dramatic improvements in Utah’s childhood immunization rates and the development of a system to track a child’s immunization record
- Successful implementation of a greatly expanded tobacco prevention and cessation program resulting in significant reductions in tobacco use
- Development of a corps of nurses to better manage the medical needs of foster children
- Providing on-line access to the Department’s extensive health data resources
- Construction of a new clinic building for children with disabilities
- Crafting one of the first state medical error reporting regulations that broke from the traditional regulatory model

“I’ve always considered public health to be a partnership among government agencies, the medical care system, and the community. This approach has proven repeatedly to be the best way to get things done.”

In the midst of these longer-term initiatives, Williams shepherded the Department through many urgent public health matters including the threat of West Nile Virus, flu vaccine shortages, anthrax letter threats, and budget cuts. “We sometimes joke at the Department that managing hot topics is the thing we do best. We clearly have no shortage of experience in that area.”

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Williams also had extensive involvement in the planning and implementation of public health responsibilities during the 2002 Winter Olympics. In his role as Utah's state-level Olympic public health official, he oversaw the coordination emergency medical services, infectious disease and bioterrorism monitoring, food and environmental inspections, health-related disaster preparedness, and providing critical health information to Utah's citizens and visitors. Williams also chaired A Healthier You 2002, which was SLOC's unique health promotion project and continues as the Gold Medal Awards program for health achievements by schools, colleges, worksites, and communities.

"I've become familiar with the public health systems in several Olympic host communities now and can say without reservation that Utah's Olympic public health team and the execution of our plan were second to none. It has been tremendously rewarding to have learned from those who came before us and to pass on our knowledge to those who are coming after."

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.